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Faction and Fusion in *The 7 Stages of Grieving*

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Indigenous Australian theatre company Kooemba Jdarra's production of Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman's The 7 Stages of Grieving *(performed by Mailman) presents us with a series of stories about grief, grieving and loss. Mailman adopts the position of a 'nomadic performer' moving between stories and personae, refusing to embrace a singular character position, instead weaving the performance together through her use* of *slides, photographs, story and song. The performer claims and marks* the *space and empowers herself through her control over representation. The stories told often use autobiographical references, however, the style of the work positions the performance piece as a pastiche of stories about Aboriginal grief and grieving rather than an attempt to tell 'true' stories. This analysis interrogates the ways in which the spectator is invited to question his/her understandings of, and responses to, the concepts* of grief *and grieving, and to further question the issue of belonging in Australia, given the past and ongoing oppression of the Indigenous peoples of this land.*

The 7 Stages of Grieving, by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman, and performed by Deborah Mailman, was produced by the indigenous theatre company Kooemba Jdarra. It premièred at the Metro Arts Theatre, Brisbane, on 13 September 1995 and, in 1996, toured Australia under the auspices of Playing Australia, the Federal Government's national arts touring programme. The production was invited to participate in the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) in 1997 where it was received with admiration and praise by many audience members and critics who appeared eager for the work to be representative of the 'true stories' of contemporary Aboriginality. They wanted to be convinced that the work was 'authentic'. As Indhu Rubasingham suggests:

> It felt as though people wanted them to be holding the future of Aboriginal vision in their hands . . . not to recognize their art as revealing or searching and drawing from an eclectic variety of cultural sources.[1]

Whilst this response highlights the importance of acknowledging the 'cultural baggage' of spectators, its literalness was unsettling for Mailman and Enoch, who argue that it is not solely a factually based work, but, rather, a work of 'faction', meaning a combination of fact and fiction.[2] Although Mailman and Enoch point out that they draw from personal stories and experiences, they also maintain that the work is part of a much larger project, a project which interrogates and chronicles some of the many types of grieving experienced by

Aboriginal people as well as the ways in which this grieving, once acknowledged, may be used as a position from which to begin thinking about reconciliation.

It is this ambiguity of the work, in terms of the performer's adoption of both a personal and a more distant, documentary-like or narratorial style of delivery, combined with the use of inscription, that creates a contemporary performance which is open to multiple interpretations and, at the same time, encourages reflection and critical engagement. Mailman adopts the position of a nomadic performer who weaves fragments of stories and ideas together through the performance, using the guise of 'autobiography' (at times) to situate the narratives, while at the same time denying any 'straight' reading of the work as 'autobiographical'.[3] The performer does not have a name: in the script she is simply referred to as 'the Woman'; a woman who moves in and out between scenes shifting in emotion and response to ideas of grief, grieving, memory and loss.[4] There is no linear narrative progression; the work comprises a series of stories, statements and stand-up routines, which criss-cross the space in patterns of laughter and sorrow, elucidating a multiplicity of experiences and interpretations of Aboriginal grief. All of these experiences are channelled through the performer Deborah Mailman, who is the central icon of the work.[5] As an embodied subject, Mailman 'possesses both the ability to be affected, and the power to affect'.[6] She adopts a nomadic position presenting a complex, woven catalogue, or collective portrait, as Rosi Braidotti suggests:

> The nomad's identity is a map of where s/he has already been; s/he can always reconstruct it *a posteriori*, as a set of steps in an itinerary . . . the nomad's identity is an inventory of traces. Were I to write an autobiography, it would be the self-portrait of a collectivity.[7]

The 7 Stages of Grieving[8] begins with a blue light shining on a large block of ice hung by seven ropes and hooks.[9] This ice is reflected onto the semicircular calico backdrop as three blocks. The stage is set and Ruby Hunter's song 'Black Woman Black Life' plays in the background. When the song has finished a cello solo and the sound of a kookaburra laughing are heard; the cello music is of a sawing nature, sharp and tense. An announcement is read from behind the scenes; a man's voice explains that there will be names and references to dead Aboriginal people, and that while permission has been granted and all care is taken, people may be offended. The first sounds of the ice melting and beginning to drip become audible. A quiet moaning is then heard to one side of the stage; it begins softly and mournfully but gradually becomes louder and more forceful. A spotlight is slowly raised on Mailman's face as she wails. She is seated on a stool/stump, dressed in white, sobbing achingly. As she sobs, words appear on the calico backdrop. Typed words flash on both sides of the performer, while some are projected onto her dress, body and face, making her part of the projection (see Figure 1). These are grief words: 'grief, grieving, sorrow, loss, death.'[10]

The wailing subsides, but not before it has touched the spectator with its sorrow. Mailman gets up and walks around in front of the projection. She begins to trace the words with her hands as if to highlight, erase or frame their significance (see Figure 1).[11] As she traces them the words disappear, and she says: 'Nothing, nothing, I feel nothing.'[12] The ice continues to drip. The fact that the words are projected through or on the performer and that she gets up to erase or outline them is significant as it immediately introduces us to the

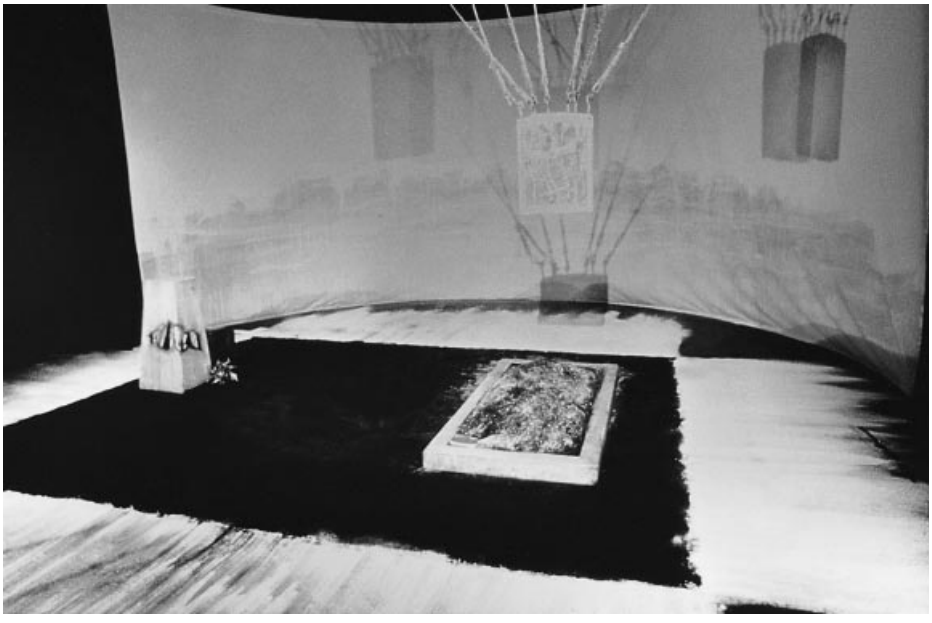

Fig. 1 **The set of *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. (Photo: Tracey Schramm)**

Fig. 2 **Deborah Mailman traces the word 'grieving' which is projected onto the backdrop. (Photo: Tracey Schramm)**

importance of inscription in this performance. The performer becomes part of the projected image and there is a constant power play between the written word and the body. Questions arise for me as a spectator as to whether she is providing a frame for these sentiments, or being marked or involuntarily inscribed. Does she manipulate the 'Nothing, nothing, I feel nothing' and erase it, or is she trying to grasp this sentiment? Perhaps something altogether different is at play. To a spectator, any of the above options is open and each inscribes a different understanding of, or engagement with, the work. Nevertheless, the heart-wrenching sobbing followed by the line 'I feel nothing' elicits an almost audible sense of tension in the space, and uncertainty reigns regarding the tone of the performance to follow. Is this to be a confrontational work, deriding the audience for wrongs against Indigenous peoples? Is all hope of connection and engagement futile?

As Mailman walks around the set it comes into focus: we are seated in a semicircle opposite a black charcoal square in the centre of the space, which is surrounded with large fringes of white chalk. Inside the central black square is a gravesite, which has recently been prepared, as there is a fresh mound of soil neatly piled on top of it. On the other side of the set is a stool/stump. The black square and white fringes are positioned in front of the calico backdrop (see Figure 2). It is a very powerful design, which Wesley Enoch describes thus:

> It's the sense that it is either something that is sinking or something that is lifted, but either way it is framed by a white perspective and so it is about owning a black space . . . we are no longer the fringe, the white is the fringe in this place.[13]

Initially the set is very ordered and clean, as is Mailman. She performs a traditional Aboriginal song and 'smokes out' spirits by burning gum leaves. This is a purification ritual in which Mailman appeals to her ancestors 'for permission to tell the story of her grief'.[14] She dances as she waves the eucalyptus leaves in the air, and when the serious nature of the proceedings is firmly entrenched in the mind of the spectator, she suddenly drops the eucalyptus and runs to the ice to soothe her burned finger. She quickly laughs and says, 'only gamin', which is the beginning of many sharp emotional shifts that punctuate the performance and render complacency impossible. The focus of this ritual is to sing songs for spirits past and it is sung and spoken in the Kamilaroi language. As the performer moves centre stage a bright slide of colourful flowers appears, and is projected through her onto the calico backdrop. She begins to talk of the death and funeral of her Nana, and delivers the opening line in a feisty manner: 'The only thing black at a funeral should be the colour of your skin.'[15] This is the first piece of 'autobiography' in the work. The performer positions herself as a granddaughter who shares a family's grieving for their grandmother: 'My grandmother was a strong god-fearing woman who, at the age of 62 was taken from us.'[16] As she describes her grandmother and explains the ways in which the family mourned her loss, Mailman's narrative is punctuated by the sounds of conversation in the background and the beautiful song of the kingfisher which seems to soar above the din of excitement involved in the wake. Although the description is of a 'contemporary' funeral and the grieving process seems, at times, similar to that of many non-Aboriginal communities, there is a subtle allusion to difference. For example, Mailman mentions that, 'After dinner the boys might paint up and dance',[17] and juxtaposes this with comments about multicultural cooking and the reactions of the neighbours, who view the proceedings across the fence armed with video

Fig. 3 **Deborah Mailman talks about her Nana's funeral. (Photo: Tracey Schramm)**

cameras![18] The monologue ends with Mailman singing, initially tentatively, and then with confidence, 'Delta Dawn', a Country and Western favourite of her Nana's.

The mood thereafter becomes darker, although continuing in the 'autobiographical' vein, as Mailman talks of the importance of removing the photographs of deceased people from view. She leans over the fresh gravesite, pulls a brown suitcase from the middle of the neatly organized grave and opens it. As Mailman sorts through photographs from the case she says, 'In the house of my parents where I grew up, there is a suitcase which lives under the old stereo in the front room.' Photographs of Aboriginal people in groups flash on the calico backdrop (see Figure 3). 'With an unspoken gesture we remove the photo of my Nana from her commanding position on the wall and quietly slip her beneath the walnut finish.'[19] A little later on Mailman stands on the stage singing another traditional Aboriginal song, 'Bului yuli mi, bului yuli mie, Naia gigi warunguldul, naia gigi warunguldul'.[20] She seems very happy, if not childlike, and dances while singing. After a little while the letters of the alphabet begin to be projected onto her dress: 'A, B, C.' She thinks this is amusing at first but begins to feel uneasy, and gradually her singing becomes faster and transforms from joy to panic as the letters continue: 'D, E, F, G, H, I.'[21] At this point the performer is almost frantic and attempts to rub out the inscription; she tries to fight against it to prevent her body being used as a surface. This is a clear signal of forced engagement with foreign principles and languages, which continues as the letters 'J, K, L, M, N' are projected onto an increasingly agitated performer who seems unsure of how to shield herself. She eventually resorts to the removal of her dress in order to protect herself from this inscription, a move that could be

read as an attempt by the performer to use her dress to protect herself from her oppressors. She stands clutching her dress in front of her body; she drops the dress as a large 'Z' is projected onto her nakedness. Her position is ambiguous: it is unclear whether she has successfully shielded herself or whether she has succumbed to being involuntarily inscribed. The process of inscription and the performer's anxiety make this scene very difficult to interpret. It offers the spectator a number of possible readings. Her actions could be read as an act of self-protection or defiance in response to imposed codes. Here, the performer takes control of the image by allowing it to rest only on her shielded body, until she feels comfortable enough to drop her dress and defiantly expose her body to the audience.

By contrast, in the following scene, Mailman vulnerably stands exposed, clutching her nakedness in almost complete darkness, with just a small crack of light visible on the set as if a door were left ajar, while she poignantly delivers an invasion poem. The poem could be seen to position the 'alphabet scene' as one which represents attempts by the colonizers to erase existing systems by over-inscribing their own, irrespective of the surface on which they write. The ambiguity in this scene is very powerful. I see the naïveté introduced at the beginning of the alphabet as representative of the openness which first greeted the colonizers, and which the performer documents through (what the authors describe as) an invasion poem: 'They come in the front door, smiling, offering gifts. I invited them in, they demanded respect.'[22] Here she poignantly recounts the trauma of European settlement on the Indigenous population, using contemporary metaphors to relate the horror: 'Together they ploughed my feet. My feet.' This is a personalized narrative of the effects of invasion: 'I lie painfully sleepless/ in a landscape of things I know are sacred/ watching unsympathetic wanderings.'[23] Mailman is positioned within the landscape of oppression and colonization, poised as a voiceless observer in her own land. Her nakedness is magnified by these lines as she stands in the darkened space with the sound of ice dripping in the background and slowly exits the space a few moments later. There is an obvious sense of culpability amongst the audience. As the poignancy of the moment is sinking in she rushes back to centre stage fully clothed. A large typed '1788' is projected onto the backdrop as the performer calls out: 'Hey you, you with the silly hat . . . you can't park here, move it, you are blocking the whole harbour.'[24] Once again a sudden shift in emotion is caused: the audience laugh heartily, but the message is given in a subtle re-negotiation of the arrival of the first fleet. In this version the oppressed take control, and the power dynamic is very different, as we imagine Mailman ushering Captain Cook out of Sydney Harbour and away from Australian shores.

The scene, entitled 'Aunty Grace' deals with the return of her aunt from London for her Nana's funeral. She sits down and opens the suitcase placing the photographs from it on the floor, the photographs are projected onto the backdrop. They are family snaps of Nana and Aunty Grace as young girls, which flash on and off the screen as the performer describes Aunty Grace:

> The pictures always showed the two sisters together. Going to a social or a party. Aunty Grace was beautiful a half-head taller than her younger sister, slender and almost inevitably dressed in white, teeth glowing and white in the two-tone capture of the moment.[25]

Grace left her home as a young woman, and this move was not seen positively by Nana, who stated: 'just when all our men were coming home and we had our share to bury too, she

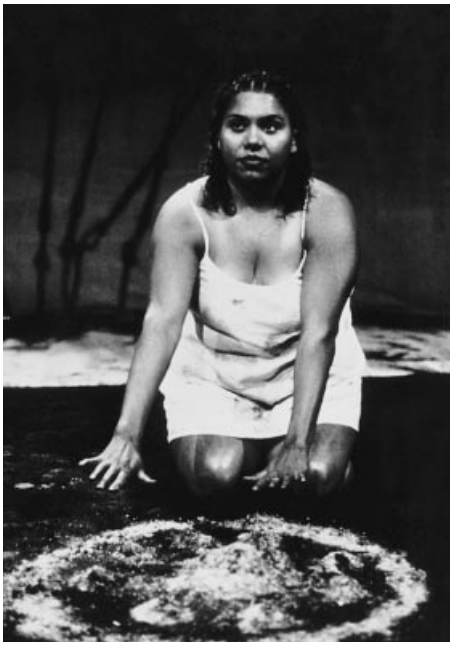

Fig. 4 **Deborah Mailman explains kinship systems with soil from the gravesite. (Photo: Tracey Schramm)**

upped and left us, the black princess sipping tea with the Queen.'[26] On her departure, all the photographs of Aunty Grace which were on display were placed in the suitcase as if she were deceased, and they were only 'brought out on request, when any of the older cousins asked about family history'.[27] Aunty Grace is described as an aloof woman who prefers not to stay with the family on her return; her aloofness and her way of responding to her loss is not considered appropriate by 'the family' who believe she is unfeeling. The difference in response highlighted here is important as it raises the issue of cultural dislocation, alienation and uneasy reconciliation after absence.

The use of the suitcase as a performative device, denoting transition and memory, again works well when the performer describes taking Aunty Grace to the airport for her return trip to London. On the way they stop to look at Nana's grave. Aunty Grace spends a long time at the gravesite: she enacts Aunty Grace dragging the suitcase from the car, tossing out her clothes onto the ground and filling the suitcase with fresh red earth from Nana's grave. In the process she begins to weep. At last her grief is audible. As a result of her decision to go to England, however, Aunty Grace is removed from the family map and only acknowledged on request. Hence, when she weeps at Nana's grave, it seems that she is not only grieving about the loss of Nana but also grieving about loss of connection, and the filling of the suitcase with the soil from Nana's grave provides a very powerful image of an act of reclamation.

A little later, Mailman kneels down beside the grave, toward the front of the stage, and in a gentle tone informs us that she is about to tell a story. Although the performer again adopts a personal position, there is nothing to suggest that her persona in this scene is related to that adopted when discussing Nana and Aunty Grace. She begins to describe kinship systems and the regulations for marriage that go with these. Mailman gets lost in her own explanation and quietly works out for herself where she went wrong. She uses soil from the now disturbed gravesite to demonstrate the kinship structures, creating a large circle and then placing piles of earth within this circle to demarcate the different kinds of groupings: 'If I was part of this pile here, that would mean this pile would be my mother, because you always follow the line of the woman.'[28] After clarifying where she went wrong, Mailman states:

> The only ones I could marry are . . . wait a minute. This mob and this mob can marry because they're grandparents and cousins. You can't marry this mob because

> they're your brothers and sisters and you can't marry this mob or this mob because they're your children . . . the only ones I could marry are this mob or this mob. Are you with me?[29]

This is followed by a silence as she picks up some of the soil from the piles and walks to the front of the stage. She stands before the white fringe and drops four separate piles of soil, in a straight line, onto the large white fringe and says: 'Now imagine when the children are taken away from this. Are you with me?'[30] This action provokes an almost audible gasp from the audience: the poignancy of the moment is overwhelming, as we see these four isolated and disconnected little piles of sand being placed in the midst of the large white fringe. The issue of the stolen generations of Aboriginal children could not have been more powerfully portrayed. As one spectator pointed out, in response to this scene:

> The most remarkable part of the work was the stark realization of the decimation of a system of family, love, connectedness, a crime perpetrated upon Aboriginal people in Australia: that jokey explanation of kinship and then the singular mounds made outside of the circle, in isolation, by the performer. Both times, those simple movements of description and intent made me weep.[31]

Mailman then steps back and disperses all the other piles of soil with the wave of her hand. She succinctly portrays, through this simple action, the devastating effects of the assimilation policy on her kinship systems, family structures and consequently on Aboriginal knowledges, culture, traditions and spirituality.

The mood shifts again with slides projecting images of Aboriginal people as slaves, accompanied by the sound of the performer singing mournfully. The images, which flash on the screen, show scenes of desolation, isolation and poverty, depicting the seven phases of Aboriginal history. Mailman sits centre stage and begins to sob, daubing herself with a mixture of mud and water from the grave. Now extremely dirty, she leaves the set weeping, and we are left with our thoughts and the sound of the ice dripping. After a few moments she returns, clean and refreshed, wearing a freshly laundered white dress. She stands on the stool and again becomes part of the projection. Handwritten slides appear and are projected onto her and through her onto the backdrop; they read: 'Wreck, Con, Silly, Nation.' She traces these slides with her hand and says:

> Wreck, Con, Silly, Nation some people I talk to would write it like this what does it mean when some people can't even read or write the word? It can't be written down, It's something that you do.[32]

We are reminded here of the first scene, as the performer tries to grasp, erase or outline the words and, as in the first scene, they vanish. They are replaced by the word 'RECONCILIATION' in large typed capital letters. The performer takes the suitcase and walks to the side of the projected 'RECONCILIATION'. She holds the suitcase up to the slide, which decreases in size until it becomes small enough to fit in the case, creating the illusion that the word fits neatly into the suitcase. She then abruptly closes the case and says: 'Everything has its time . . . everything has its time.'[33] With the power of reconciliation in her suitcase the performer clasps it in her arms, walks to the front of the stage and begins to recite a plea:

> You know there has always been this grieving, grieving for our land, our families. Our cultures that have been denied us. But we have been taught to cry quietly.

> Where only our eyes betray us with tears. But now, we can no longer wait, I am scared my heart is hardening. I fear I can no longer grieve I am so full and know my capacity for grief. What can I do but perform.[34]

Mailman then moves forward and places the suitcase in front of the audience, perhaps inviting us to engage with the concept, to take the suitcase and to focus on its contents. She then begins to retreat; she turns to us and with a bright smile says: 'Nothing, nothing, I feel nothing.'[35] The audience applauds as she leaves the space. The ending leaves us unsure and perhaps a little confused. What does this 'Nothing, nothing, I feel nothing' imply for the spectator? While initially I felt that it was a negative expression of the hopelessness of the situation, the performer's smile made me reconsider. Although open-ended, the final comment could imply that the performer, through the focus on the issues of grief and loss, had achieved a sense of catharsis: she had reached a point of transition where a 'new paradigm'[36] could be embarked upon as a result of the performance. This interpretation acknowledges the importance of the work as a processual piece, in which grieving is worked through to a point where people can begin to engage in discussion. Such discussion would have been impossible at the beginning of the play, however, because the process of transition from the acknowledgment of grief and grieving to the point of reconciliation must be achieved first.[37]

The 7 Stages of Grieving is a work which shifts and changes as Mailman weaves her way in and out of scenes, moving between joy, tears, anger and passion. She adopts the position of a nomadic performer, who uses her body to connect with the set, as a surface and as a vehicle, carrying messages to and from the spectators. The performer becomes what Rosi Braidotti describes as 'an inter-face, a threshold, a field of intersection of material and symbolic forces'.[38] Mailman is both the site of inscription and the inscriber of meaning. Her ability to exist and perform from this in-between or 'threshold' position, combined with her ability to move between personal storytelling (in the guise of autobiography) and a more abstract narrative style, instills *The 7 Stages of Grieving* with its power. As a result of these transitions and movement, the performer prohibits complacency and encourages the spectator actively to engage with the work, to 'make and transform meanings' in response to her wanderings.[39] At the same time, Mailman deconstructs static notions of cultural diversity and creates a work which is, as Hetti Perkins has pointed out in relation to contemporary urban Aboriginal art, 'interventionist rather than oppositional, pragmatic yet never apolitical'.[40]

NOTES

1 I. Rubasingham, 'Indhu Rubasingham on Authenticity and the Search for Form', www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/lift/stages.html (accessed 24 June 1997).

2 Mailman made this point on the television programme *Songlines*, ABC TV, broadcast October 1997.

3 There is much concern with issues of belonging and 'locatedness' in Australia currently. In an environment where Indigenous people are often silenced or rendered invisible by the policies of our conservative government, and non-Indigenous people appear to be uneasily positioned at the colonizer/colonized nexus, attempting to claim or expand the post in post-colonialism is becoming an increasingly difficult task. In this regard works like *The 7 Stages of Grieving* need both celebration and critical engagement, as they demand a space to speak about the complexities of this environment. I

have chosen to employ Rosi Braidotti's figuration of 'nomadic' subjectivity as the framework for my analysis. I believe this concept captures the complexities of our postcolonial moment whilst at the same time positioning agency with the performer so that the power to interrogate and represent is hers.

4 The summary at the beginning of the published text calls it the depiction of the journey of an Aboriginal 'Everywoman'. See Wesley Enoch & Deborah Mailman, *The 7 Stages of Grieving* (Brisbane: Playlab Press, 1996), p. 1.

5 Deborah Mailman is an Indigenous Australian.

6 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 73.

7 Ibid., p. 14.

8 I first saw *The 7 Stages of Grieving* at the Belvoir Theatre (Sydney) on Tuesday 5 March 1996, as part of the Nambundah Festival. My analysis is based on my various experiences of the performance, combined with a draft script supplied by Deborah Mailman and Wesley Enoch in 1995. (References are to the published text unless otherwise stated.)

9 The seven ropes represent the seven phases of Aboriginal history which were combined with Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of dying as the framework upon which *The 7 Stages of Grieving* emerged. The seven phases of Aboriginal history are Dreaming, Invasion, Genocide, Protection, Assimilation, Self-Determination and Reconciliation. The five phases of dying are Denial and Isolation, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance. See Enoch & Mailman *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, back cover.

10 Enoch and Mailman,*The 7 Stages of Grieving*. p. 41.

11 All photographs were taken by Tracey Schramm and are reproduced with her permission as well as the permission of Kooemba Jdarra Theatre Company.

12 Enoch and Mailman, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. p. 41.

13 Personal interview with Deborah Mailman and Wesley Enoch, Sydney, 8 March 1996.

14 Enoch and Mailman, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, p. 42.

15 Ibid., p. 44.

16 Ibid., p. 44.

17 Ibid., p. 45.

18 Mailman and Enoch maintain that there is no break between the contemporary and traditional elements of Aboriginal culture, but that they infuse and inform one another. As Wesley Enoch pointed out in discussion with me, '*The 7 Stages of Grieving* in terms of the integration of visuals, song, dance, music, family and socio-political storytelling operates as an unbroken line. There always seems to be this polarity between traditional and contemporary elements of Aboriginal culture where in fact there is no break'. The polarity implied here is a division or juxtaposition created and maintained by the dominant culture. The fusion of traditional and contemporary elements is constantly highlighted throughout Deborah Mailman's performance.

19 Enoch and Mailman, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, p. 46.

20 Ibid., p. 50.

21 Ibid., p. 7.

22 Ibid., p. 51.

23 Ibid., p. 51.

24 Ibid., p. 52.

25 Ibid., p. 56.

26 Ibid., p. 56.

27 Ibid., p. 56.

28 Ibid., p. 63.

29 Ibid., p. 65.

30 Ibid., p. 65.

31 Helena Grehan, unpublished interview with Terri-ann White, 1995.

32 Enoch and Mailman, *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, p. 72.

33 Ibid., p. 72.
34 Ibid., p. 73.
35 Ibid., p. 74.
36 As cited in my interview with Wesley Enoch earlier in this paper.
37 Both Peggy Phelan and Vivian Patraka deal with issues of grief, loss and performativity in their work. See particularly Phelan's *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London: Routledge, 1997) and Patraka's *Spectacular Suffering: Theatre, Fascism and the Holocaust (Unnatural Acts: Theorizing the Performative)* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999). In *Mourning Sex* Phelan focuses on embodiment and performance. She engages with notions of grief, trauma and reconstruction fusing 'performative writing' and critical analysis to interrogate 'the possibility that something substantial can be made from the outline left after the body has disappeared' (p. 3). In *Spectacular Suffering* Patraka theorizes the articulation of memory, history and suffering through a focus on the Holocaust and asks us to reflect upon the role of performance in attempting to represent this fraught landscape. Whilst on the surface these works may appear discrete and specific, each of them extends our understanding of, and engagement with, notions of the performativity of grief and loss and in this regard they should be considered alongside *The 7 Stages of Grieving*, a work which is attempting to use performance to move into 'a new paradigm' of understanding between and among cultures.
38 Rosi Braidotti, *Patterns of Dissonance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 219.
39 Elin Diamond, *Performance and Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 3.
40 Hetti Perkins, 'Introduction' in *Blakness: Blak City Culture* (Sydney: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art/Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, 1994), p. 7.

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